

A decorative border with intricate floral and scrollwork patterns, rendered in a dark brown color, framing the entire page.

In A Second, The World Changes

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Summary:

Eddie Kaspbrak woke up.

Which was surprising, really, considering what he remembered happening just before he had died. His right shoulder ached and sparks of fire-hot pain arced through the joint. His arm had been torn off, he remembered that.

He was soaked in enough blood that he should still be dead.

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Author's Note:

It happened on a Sunday,
Outside and the sun was shining.
That look on your face
Oh, it hit me so hard inside.
I could see how the light was fading
From your pretty blue eyes and
All I needed were the right words,
But they were so hard to find.

In a second my world changed
So fast that my heart was breaking
I wrapped my arms around you
And I just kept saying your name and
I put your hands in my hands
And we dropped to the floorboard crying
At the moment your heart gave up on us

I kissed your tears all falling down
I said baby, you'll always be the one
Aw I'm never going to turn around
You're all the life that I have in these lungs

We can all be scared to death
Never certain of what it is we want
All the fears we should confess
Holding our breath just dying to speak up

--"Bring You Back" Brett Eldredge

Eddie Kaspbrak woke up.

Which was surprising, really, considering what he remembered happening just before he had died. His right shoulder ached and sparks of fire-hot pain arced through the joint. His arm had been torn off, he remembered that.

He was soaked in enough blood that he should still be dead.

A strange chirping noise caught his attention and he nearly screamed as he caught a glimpse of what had made the noise. In front of him was a creature that almost looked human except for the fact that the limbs were too long, the eyes too big. The creature had a hand on his chest, nails digging into the skin, and he felt his heart thump in response to the movement of their fingers.

“No die,” it hissed out. “Enemy of enemy.”

It.

The thing they had been fighting for what seemed like their entire lives. Eddie swallowed nervously, trying to sit up. “Am I-”

With a shake of their head, the creature pulled him upright, reaching for the stump of his arm and wrapping something about it. “Can smell It,” they whispered, long fingers securing what seemed to be a silk bandage. “Smell fear and children and death. Deadlight.”

“Deadlight?”

“...Clown?” the creature looked confused for a second. “Right word?”

“Pennywise,” Eddie’s entire body went tense as he said the name. “The dancing clown. That’s what It calls itself.” He watched the creature pat gently at the stump of his arm. “It took my arm off.”

“Knows,” the creature nodded, their long fingers making an irritated motion. “Still here. Attacking and scaring.” They petted at his hair and he managed to not wince backward. “Enemies of enemy,” they hissed the words out again and Eddie realized they were angry about It.

“Are you hunting It down?” he asked quietly.

The creature nodded.

“My friends are fighting It,” Eddie swallowed. “Oh, god, Richie is-” he tried standing up and wobbled before dropping back to the ground. The creature leaned in and stood up slightly, curling under

his arm and picking him up. "Richie is fighting It. My friends are fighting It, I need to be there with them!"

"Brave, brave, enemy of enemy," the creature whispered, adjusting their hold on him. "Nightmares given form, given reality. Brave, brave."

The tunnels passed by in a blur and Eddie let himself drift a little, eyes half-closed as he kept his remaining hand over his heart. It was beating fast like it had when he was a kid in a panic attack. The creature was warm under and around him, movements quick and easy.

"Richie will be safe," they muttered.

Ahead of them, the adults that the Losers club had become were standing over the dismembered body of a spider-like creature. Richie's eyes were wild as he stared down at the corpse of the monster that had haunted them for decades. Mike was standing next to him, solidarity in the way he had a hand on his shoulders.

Stan had refused to come, Eddie remembered. Stan had killed himself rather than coming back to face the thing that had nearly destroyed him when he was a kid.

Eddie couldn't blame him.

Bill reached out to take Richie's hand, as did Beverly. Ben seemed to sigh and nudged the body with his toe as if making sure it was actually dead. Seemingly convinced, he turned to look at the others and spotted Eddie.

"Uh," Ben blinked a couple of times.

"Ben?" Bev turned to look at him, her long red hair escaping from the way she'd had it pinned back earlier. "Ben, what's wrong?"

He gestured behind her, behind the rest of them, and Eddie wanted to laugh. Wanted to shout and say hi and tell them he was alright, but he was exhausted still, his entire body trembling and weak. "Am I going to live?" he asked the creature holding him, his voice quiet.

“Will,” they nodded, loping forward a bit further and settling him against their side as they prodded at the corpse. “Blood loss, working on it, will live.”

Eddie nodded.

“Eddie,” Richie’s voice was a wreck, like he had been screaming for hours. “Eddie!”

He couldn’t resist, he had to do it. “Beep beep, Richie.”

With a glance at the creature holding him, Richie lunged forward and wrapped his arms around Eddie, doing his best to not touch the one holding him. “Oh my god, Eddie, you’re- I watched you die, what the hell?” he pulled back, not letting go of Eddie. “You were dead, you died, what is happening right now?”

“Saved,” the creature turned to Richie, big eyes watching him for a moment. “Enemies of enemy,” they gestured at It and seemed to smile. “Victorious. Many thanks.”

Richie nodded slowly, as if he wasn’t sure just what was happening but he was willing to let it go. “You brought Eddie back,” he looked at the creature. “Why?” his grip tightened on Eddie. “I mean, I’m not complaining, but it would be nice to know why.”

“Allowed to hold him,” the creature settled Eddie on his feet and pushed him entirely into Richie’s arms. “Keep safe, upright. Need to do things.” They prodded further at It’s body, snarling quietly as they pulled open the tooth-filled mouth. They pulled a blade out of the leg of their clothing and slit It open from the mouth to the gaping hole in It’s chest where the Losers had pulled out the heart. “Dead. Definite. Victorious,” the creature smiled again, head inclining in an almost-bow. “Escape the under,” with a jerk of their head, the creature took Eddie back. “Climbing. Missing arm. Hard.”

“Yeah,” Richie followed right behind, still a little shell-shocked.

Eddie couldn’t blame him.

The tears that had dropped onto his face hadn’t been his own, after all. The kiss pressed into his cheek had been one filled with regret

and sadness and fear – He knew what those felt like, so well that it almost felt like they were all that made him some days. Richie had held onto him so tightly and it had made Eddie wonder exactly how much of their teenage flirting had been not-a-joke. How much of it had been him and Richie circling each other.

How much of it he could have acted on without the other boy panicking at him.

Richie stayed close as they climbed out of the well, got back on solid ground. Stayed close even as the creature climbed the wall of the well, still carrying him. The others were with them, but somehow the world had narrowed down to just him and Richie.

“You,” Richie dropped to the steps of the Neibolt house and the creature settled Eddie next to him. “You’re alive.”

“Yes,” the creature nodded, nudging them together. “Safe, sound. Enemies of enemy, happiness reward.” The creature looked at Mike. “Call. Four days.” At Bill for a second, head bowing. “Cannot fix the damage. Too long ago. Apologies.”

“That’s o- That’s okay.” Bill swallowed. “Just...Thank you for what you’ve already done,” he reached for his wife’s hand and Eddie realized she had rejoined them on the way out of the tunnels. “I don’t think Richie was going to be okay without Eddie,” he said quietly, looking at both of them.

Oh.

Eddie leaned into Richie’s shoulder, feeling like a kid again. The same confused emotions bubbling in his chest, fondness and happiness and annoyance at the jokes. “So,” he whispered to Richie. “How long have you been in love with me?”

“Forever, you idiot,” Richie whispered back, his entire body shaking. “Eds...”

“You know,” Eddie laughed a little. “I think I’m starting to like being called that.” He turned his head to press a careful kiss into Richie’s shoulder. “Keep calling me that.”

“Anything,” Richie turned and wrapped his arms around him again, holding him close. He cracked a smile. “Died and came back, Christ, Kaspbrak, is there any other weird shit you need to tell me? I feel like I should know these things.”

“I have a marriage I need to annul,” Eddie muttered. “Myra deserves someone who actually loves her.”

“You don’t?”

“Nah,” Eddie sighed and let his eyes close as he listened to Richie’s heartbeat. “Fell in love with this *really* annoying guy when I was thirteen, got scared of the response from the small town we lived in, never told him. Thought it would be a good time, now.” He looked up and smiled. “Missed him a lot. Married someone just like my mother – Christ, we sleep in separate rooms, Richie. You really leave an impression on a guy, Trashmouth.”

Richie laughed and pulled Eddie into his lap. “You do too, Eds.” He ruffled Eddie’s hair, mussing the neatly combed style of it.

They had finally defeated It and everything was going to be okay.

Author's Note:

Because fuck it, that's why.